The See You Collective's Non-Monetary Resource Toolkit

(established in 2023, last updated in 2024)

NO LONGER A LIVING DOCUMENT

Information and resources for Clark University students and Worcester residents facing financial and other types of insecurity.

Chapters: (click to jump)

Housing
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Housing

- Very detailed resource guide about how to be a tenant in Worcester made by a Clark student, where you can find housing and what to look for/ask about while searching, legal rights and the obligations of landlords, budgeting and nutrition guides, internet provider information, and some of the protocols and best practices. Ideally, this will also be accompanied by a program that meets either semesterly or annually to go over these things and answer questions.
    - There is need for more support in actually filling out applications and it does not cover rent relief.
- Housing Consumer Education Centers: This resource provides a lot of information about housing and being a tenant. It has links to resources about a wide range of topics, from navigating bills to fuel assistance, and so much more that go beyond housing directly.
- Worcester Housing Authority: manages state and federal subsidized housing units. Also offers summer camp program for children.
- Renters assistance:
    - There are 3 main types, which are listed below (The federal government funds the Section 8 assistance through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Commonwealth funds the MRVP and

AHVP programs). Eligibility for these programs vary and can be quite extensive, so the links below provide direct information that should make that information clear instead of attempting to list it all out on this document.
    - Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP)
        - This link has more information about the program and eligibility, and information about how to apply. They do warn that the waitlist is long, so this may not be the best option in a time sensitive situation, but it is always worth it to check it out
    - Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)
        - Income limits for eligibility
        - Applying for a rental voucher
    - Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)
        - This program provides rental assistance to people with disabilities under the age 60, who either live in, or are eligible to live in elderly/disabled state assisted public housing
        - There is more information about this program on the link listed under the next bullet point.
- For more information about renters assistance programs, click this link and scroll down to Rental Assistance. There are clear guidelines for what the programs provide and how eligibility works for these programs, as well as additional resources that go beyond these main 3 programs
    - https://www.mass.gov/guides/a-guide-to-obtaining-housing-assistance
- Main page for Massachusetts rent relief programs. This site provides many prompts for different rent assistance needs and may help answer questions about where to look next.
- Housing Assistance Application Reference Guide: This is provided by Massachusetts government and is a comprehensive guide to applying for housing assistance
- RAFT: Residential Assistance for Families in Transition
    - The RAFT Program is a homelessness prevention program funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). RAFT provides short-term financial assistance to low-income families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
    - Google form that helps inform you of your eligibility RAFT
- Central MA Housing Alliance: Responds to homelessness and fosters stability through prevention, shelters, and safety net.
- Public Housing Resources: This website has information about the types of public housing available and eligibility and application processes

- Legal and Mediation Assistance
    - Eviction Legal Services and Mediation

    - Resolution Massachusetts: This resources helps provide free mediation for tenents and landlords in Massachusetts
    - Tenant and Housing Alliance of Worcester: Tenant- and worker-led movement to advance tenants' rights. May be able to assist with tenants' rights violations; contact for more info.
- Worcester Tenant's Union or Tenant and Housing Association of Worcester (THAW)
    - @worctenants on Instagram
- "THAW is an organization of tenants and workers in the Worcester area, united to empower tenants and end the exploitation of rent.
- We believe in direct action and in building a mass movement of tenants and working-class people with the power to decommodify housing. We want to bring housing under the control of the people who live in it. By building relationships with our neighbors we create tenant unions and neighborhood councils, which are collectively strong enough to pressure landlords to lower rents, make repairs, and stop evictions."
    - Activities:
    - - Training including anti-eviction, tenant's rights, and community tenant organizing
    - - Tracking and publicizing evictions and predatory landlords in Worcester
    - - Direct action, emergency response, and advice for people being evicted (legally or illegally)
    - - Educating about and building "tent-safer" alcohol heaters for cold-weather survival

Utilities

- Resource Locator
    - This website allows you to find localized resources for a wide range of assistance, including legal aid, emergency resources, local administrative agencies for housing assistance programs, utility assistance, and more.
- Federal Connectivity Charter: Wifi / phone bill subsidies
    - Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) sponsored through FCC ($30 subsidies for low-incomes, discounted for Spectrum)
- Energy
    - Energy Switch Massachusetts: This website can help you make the most affordable decision about your energy provider
    - Eversource: There are not offering direct discounts as of this time, but their website offers tips for saving money as a renter and creating an energy efficient home
    - Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP): Offers subsidies to pay utility bills as well as services to heat-proof homes and install equipment and appliances. Can apply between November and April.

- JOE-4-SUN: This is a solar energy program that provides free solar energy for low income residents across Massachusetts. The website provides more information about the program, eligibility, and how to apply.
- The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund: This fund provides energy assistance residents in temporary crisis who are struggling to pay their energy bills and do not qualify for federal or state energy funds.
- Understanding your bill
    - This link breaks down how to understand your electric bill: https://energyswitchma.gov/#/about/understandingbill
    - Mass.gov resource on understanding your electric and gas bills https://www.mass.gov/info-details/understanding-your-utility-bill

- Mass.gov resources:
    - Where to start and knowing your rights
        - This link answers a lot of questions about your rights as a tenant, and when your utilities can and cannot be shut off
            - https://www.mass.gov/service-details/when-am-i-protected-from-having-my-utilities-shut-off
        - This link helps clarify your rights as a tenant and when utilities can or cannot be turned off, as well as providing information about utility relief/discounts and eligibility, how and where to apply, and ways to reduce your bills. This website links many additional resources that can help with these specific needs.
            - https://www.mass.gov/info-details/help-paying-your-utility-bill
        - This link provides a great starting point for questions about utilities. In the following bullet points, more specific utilities needs will be addressed, but this link may be able to direct you to resources for specific needs, or help you answer questions about your utilities and rights.
            - https://www.mass.gov/keeping-your-utilities-on
        - The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)
            - DHCD oversees funding and resources to help people in Massachusetts live affordably and safely. This is a broader resource, and can be used as a point of contact for housing and utility assistance. It also contains a list of A-Z resources that may be useful in navigating this type of assistance.

        The Department of Public Utilities

            DPU is is responsible for oversight of investor-owned electric power, natural gas, and water utilities in the Commonwealth, and the protection of consumer rights and low costs. This department may be useful for addressing complaints, identifying regulations, and finding additional resources.

        What you need to know about electricity supply options

This resource answers a lot of detailed questions about energy supply in Massachusetts
    - https://www.mass.gov/service-details/what-do-i-need-to-know-about-my-electric-supply-options-in-massachusetts
- Filing a gas, electric, or water complaint
    - File a complaint online or find who to contact
    - Navigating how to file consumer complaints

Billing and termination procedures of the Department of Public Utilities
- This is a very formal legal document that provides details about the legal procedures for billing and termination. This resource is good for knowing your rights and for referring back to if needed, but may not be the most straightforward resource for easily understanding how to navigate utilities or for answering questions.
    https://www.mass.gov/how-to/file-a-complaint-involving-a-gas-electric-or-water-company
- Learning About Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)
    The Massachusetts home energy assistance program (LIHEAP) is a free resource to help eligible households pay a portion of winter heating bills. This is a free program, and the link below offers more details about the program, eligibility, and how to apply. At the bottom of this website, it also provides assistance for heating repair, winter water bills, and other housing related assistance.
    https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-home-energy-assistance-liheap
- How to find your gas, electric, and water provider
    This link will help you identify and contact your local providers.
    https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-my-electric-gas-and-water-company
- Avoiding heating scams
    https://www.mass.gov/service-details/avoid-heating-scams
- Wifi / phone bill subsidies (Federal Connectivity Charter?)
    Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) sponsored through FCC ($30 subsidies for low-incomes, discounted for Spectrum)
- Energy and Utility Assistance from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Apply and see eligibility guidelines on website.

Food

- All Saints' Church (Thursday Café) - 10 Irving Street
    - Thursdays (bagged lunch): 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm
    - Sundays (year-round)

- The Bridge Fridge: Community fridge in Southbridge managed by The WellStorm, Inc.
- El Buen Samaritano Food Pantry: Open every Friday from 11am-2pm at 39 Piedmont St, Worcester MA 01610
- FIRM Pantry / Jeremiah's Inn: Clark students can go to the Jeremiah's Inn Food Pantry (1059 Main St Worcester, MA 01603) during their open hours (M 12-3:30, TRF 9-2 w/ a lunch break 11:30-12, and W 12:30-3:30)
    - Wednesdays Jeremiah's Inn is open to exclusively Clark students, shortest line on this day
- Food Help Worcester: Connects Worcester residents in need of food assistance with local providers of healthy food and meals.
- Food Pantry List: A comprehensive list of Worcester area food pantries, locations and hours of operation.
- Food Pantries Near Bus Stops: On this map, there is a collection of food pantries in the City of Worcester that are within 400 meters of a bus stop
- John Street Baptist Church - 43 John Street
    - Saturdays (free groceries): 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
- Living Word Church - 30 Tyler Prentice Road
    - Wednesdays (fresh food): 11:00 am - 2:00 pm (or as long as supplies last)
- Massachusetts Healthy Incentives Program (HIP): State program managed by the Department of Transitional Assistance which puts money back on a client's EBT card when it is used SNAP to buy healthy, local fruits and vegetables from HIP farm vendors/farmers markets.
- The Mustard Seed - 93 Piedmont Street
    - Monday - Friday: 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm
- Net of Compassion - Main and Sycamore Streets (next to the YMCA)
    - Saturdays: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm
- REC Farmers Markets: Accepts SNAP/HIP benefits & WIC coupons (as well as cash and card). Various mobile market locations in Worcester, online orders, and seasonal standing markets
- Saint Francis Xavier (St. John's) - 44 Temple Street in Worcester
    - Monday - Friday: 7:30 am - 11:00 am
- Saint Peter's Food Pantry: The Saint Peter's Church is located across from Annie's Clark Brunch. The pantry runs out of their gym. Their walk-up and drive-up food pantry is on Wednesdays at 7am and ends at 11am or when food runs out.
    - They do ask people to sign up for their program and take ID/write down names. Also, workers from the Worcester DA are often there to 'help' with distribution
- The Salvation Army - 640 Main Street
    - Monday - Friday: 9:00 am - 2:00 pm
    - Sunday: 5:00 pm

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): SNAP benefits include monthly funds on an EBT card to buy food
    - Eligibility
    - Apply
    - Healthy Incentives Program (HIP): MA program that provides an additional $40-80 on EBT cards to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. Can be used at farmers markets and for CSA shares, no application or registration necessary (comes with EBT cards)
- Swipe Out Hunger @ Clark: The Swipe Out Hunger (SOH) Program offers free meal swipes, which can be added to Clark OneCard.
    - Currently, requests for access to the SOH are through the Emergency Funding Request.
    - Students can also contact Shalyn Hopley Malko at shopley@clarku.edu for further information about the SOH application process.
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program: WIC is for those living in Massachusetts, experiencing a nutritional need, are a child under 5, a new parent (mom), or a pregnant or breastfeeding person, and have a family income less than WIC guidelines. People are automatically eligible if they have MassHealth/Medicaid insurance plans, on SNAP, or are part of Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children or cash assistance. WIC is available regardless of immigration or citizenship status.
    - Eligibility
    - Apply
    - WIC approved stores
- Worcester Community Fridges (Free Fridge): Woo Fridge has various free community fridges/pantries around Worcester. The locations closest to Clark University are 44 Portland St and 695 Southbridge St. (The location outside of Fantastic Pizza on Main St has closed).

Tuition + School Related Expenses

- Legal Defense Fund (LDF) Herbert Lehman Scholarship: Scholarship opportunity for Black undergraduate students, awarding $3,000/year
- LULAC National Scholarship Fund: Scholarship opportunity for Latiné college students, awards ranging from $500-$2,000
- Stonewall Community Foundation Scholarships: Scholarship opportunities for LGBTQ+ college students, awards ranging from $4,000-$18,000

Clothes

- Grace Closet: Clothing distribution program that is part of Nets of Compassion. The clothing pantry, located at 674 Main St, is open from 1-4pm on Wednesdays

Transportation

- Patients Rising - free transportation services for those that cannot afford emergency services (directed to those with chronic illness or serious injuries)
- Transportation Resource Guide (MRTA) - Service for disabled Massachusetts residents, includes T-Access guide, door-to-door transportation services. May be helpful for students around Massachusetts, but many services are offered in or near Boston.
- Wheels to Work- provides donated cars to individuals in Massachusetts who cannot afford cars; “Qualified applicants must be a client of MRC and have a written Individual Plan for Employment”., which will need more looking into, and whether this is as accessible as it seems
- WRTA buses are fare free! Attached is the schedule, and the bus tracker which helps locate buses. https://www.therta.com/schedules/ There are additional languages and information on accessibility as well.

Medical

- abortioncarenewengland.org: resource for finding abortion clinics and pills in New England
- AIDS Project Worcester: free, confidential testing for STDs/HIV, narcan training and narcan available, free peer support program and mental health services for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS
- all-options.org | 888-493-0092: resource for general abortion support in MA
- arfwm.org | 413-582-3532: resource for abortion funding in Western MA
- bostondoulaproject.org | 617-971-8476: resource for general abortion support in MA
- CENTRO: Formerly Centro Las Americas, CENTRO provides culturally and linguistically competent case management, community-based, social, behavioral, mental health, and health-related services.
- Durable Medical Equipment: REquipment is a durable medical equipment reuse program, which offers supplies to adults, children and elders in MA. Search their inventory for free refurbished wheelchairs, scooters, shower chairs and more items.
- Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center (Worcester): provides health services for all (regardless of ability to pay), sliding-scale fees

"Currently close to 30,000 patients of all ages receive care and service through Kennedy Community Health's family practice model of care, a comprehensive approach to the delivery of quality primary and urgent care, dental care, optometry, pharmacy, behavioral health, substance use treatment and social services, women's health, HIV/AIDs treatment and services, medical specialties, LGBTQ+ services including a transgender practice, nutrition counseling, laboratory, and health education programs"

- emafund.org | 866-354-3839: resource for abortion funding in Eastern MA
- Family Health Center (Worcester): Urgent Care, Primary care, dental, behavioral/mental health services, LGTBQ+ health services, etc
    - Homeless Outreach & Advocacy Project (HOAP) at Family Health Center of Worcester: Offers medical screenings, primary care, and an array of other health services to unhoused individuals

  Mission statement: "To improve the health and well-being of all residents in the Greater Worcester area, especially culturally diverse populations, by providing affordable, high quality, integrated, comprehensive, respectful primary health care and social services, regardless of patients' ability to pay."
- janefund.org | 508-829-7300: resource for abortion funding in Central MA
- mahotline.org | 833-246-2632 (call or text): resource for general abortion support in MA
- onlineabortionresources.org: resource for finding abortion clinics and pills
- Planned Parenthood (Worcester): affordable health care services
    - https://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-massachusetts/online-health-center/sexual-health-hotline | 617-616-1616: resource for general abortion support in MA
- Quinsigamond Community College dental clinic (Worcester): $20 dental services for college students
- Road to Care Mobile Medical Clinic: Free health visits from UMass Memorial Health. Services include primary care visits, substance use disorder treatment, health screenings, and laboratory and medication services. Services offered at various times and locations in Worcester (check their FB page for their updates and flyers)
- Ronald McDonald Care Mobile: Provides medical and preventative dental services for children and their families in Worcester. The care mobile service serves various locations around the city, regardless of ability to pay, insurance, or documentation.
- sharesafeabortion.info: resource for finding abortion clinics and pills
- tidesforchange.wixsite.com/tides: resource for abortion funding in MA
- Worcester Free Care Collaborative: Provides health services and support to anyone regardless of income, insurance, or housing status. Various health clinics and locations around the city.

Childcare

- Early Education Assistance Application- State government program that provides child care assistance services and applications to receive funding for early childhood care. This requires an income threshold and service-met requirements to apply and receive funding
- Mass. Child Care Subsidies/Vouchers- collected resources for childcare vouchers and child care facilities that are available across the state. Worcester falls into the Children Aid & Family Services (sevenhills.org)
- Mass211 - Similar assistance as those above, including a childcare center finder, and connections to government vouchers for childcare. "A Child Care Subsidy may be available to eligible children ages prenatal to age 13yo (16yo if the child has a diagnosed special need)." Free and confidential child care assistance
- Day care centers:
    - Webster Square Day Care Center
    - YMCA Central Community Branch Preschool
    - Guild of St. Agnes

International Students

We are frustrated by the lack of readily accessible support for international students. Although we struggled to find programs and support networks, we aim to have this section in the Toolkit. We are calling on our community to send in a collection of resources that may be relevant here: email us at seeyoucollective@gmail.com with the subject line "Addition to Resource Toolkit."

Miscellaneous

- 211 Help Steps: dial 211 - provides information based on location for a number of services including but not limited to food, housing, mental health, medical care and insurance, transportation, and utilities
- Catholic Charities, 10 Hammond Street, Worcester
- Free Formula Exchange -nationwide mutual aid network connecting families who need baby formula to people who have formula to donate.
- Joshua's Showers for the Homeless: Provides a hot shower, clean towel and fresh change of clothes for houseless people in Worcester
- Massachusetts Department of Transitional Services- contains a wide variety of assistance from the government, including SNAP applications and cash benefit applications for low income individuals. This also includes employment assistance and legal assistants.
- Mutual Aid Worcester Facebook group
- See You Collective's non-monetary mutual aid Facebook group

- From the Worcester Community Action Council:
    - Affordable Connectivity Program -The Affordable Connectivity Program is an FCC benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare and more. The benefit provides a discount of up to $30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to $75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to $100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers if they contribute more than $10 and less than $50 toward the purchase price.
    - Elder Home Repair – Elder Home Repair is a unique program targeting the special needs of fixed and often low-income elderly homeowners. We support the age network concept of 'aging in place' by helping assure a physically safe and healthful home. Specifically, the program corrects unsafe housing conditions (while contained at a manageable scale), which if left unattended, threaten the immediate health and safety of elders at home as well as the structural integrity of their homes. Charges are for materials only; there is no fee for labor.
    - Family Resource Centers– statewide network of community-based providers offering multi-cultural parenting programs, support groups, information and referral resources and education for families whose children range in age from birth to 18 years of age. Family Resource Centers are located in 24 communities throughout Massachusetts to provide easy access to information and assistance related to health care, safety, employment training, education and peer support. In each of these communities and centers, the goal is to support families to strengthen their bonds, connect to others, and engage in their community.
        - Southbridge Family Resource Center
        - Worcester Family Resource Center
    - Resource Locator
        - This website allows you to find localized resources for a wide range of assistance, including legal aid, emergency resources, local administrative agencies for housing assistance programs, utility assistance, and more.
    - Worcester Family Resource Center, 20 Cedar Street, Worcester, 508 796-1411
    - HALO - Homeless Addicts Leadership Organization
    - Mission statement: "HALO is a multi-faceted organization of unhoused drug users who envision a city in which the humanity of all unhoused drug users is respected and where they feel safe to exist. This means the dehumanizing of individuals, the stigma attached to homelessness and drug use, as well as harmful policies are eliminated, and there is a

foundation of institutions such as overdose prevention sites, year-round shelters, and housing programs that prevent avoidable harm and death."

    - Activities:
    - - Monday night distributions of harm redux and survival materials for homeless individuals
    - - Monthly membership meetings (reserved for homeless people and PWUD)
    - - the HALO Hopeline (774-326-1770) - a phone line for stigmatized individuals to share negative experiences with local service organizations/government services
    - - Invisible No More Initiative - amplifying the voices of homeless people through sharing of first-hand accounts and testimonials from the Worcester community

- Worcester County Sheriff's Office Regional Reentry Center: 365 Main Street, Worcester; (508) 752-1212
    - Offers free services such as support groups, employment searches, legal documentation (i.e., birth certificates, Social Security cards), sober living resources, agency referrals, and more